Plants of Corbett National Park, Uttar Pradesh

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(With a map)

A sketch of the vegetation and its constituent elements, in the Corbett National Park, with local names for several of the plants as also a habit-wise list of 232 species is presented.

Currently, an awareness of our rapidly changing environment, and the consequent need for conservation of the quickly altering and sometimes dwindling or even disappearing wild life, including plants and animals, has underlined the need, for an adequate knowledge of our wild life. In different parts of the country National Parks and wild life sanctuaries have been established. In view of the more appealing nature of the wild animal life and the publicity given to some, like the lion, the rhino and the tiger, the plant cover in which these live and the close interaction of vegetation with animal life, tends to remain unemphasised. However, recently this aspect is being attended to and either preliminary or full accounts of the flora of some of our sanctuaries and National Parks have been published (Santapau & Randeria 1955, Maheshwari 1963, Naithani 1966). The Botanical Survey of India has taken up detailed and elaborate study of the vegetation of these interesting areas, in different parts of the country. Thus Botanical Survey of India (Northern Circle) has been concerned with the vegetation of Corbett National Park, which is within its area. This account is based upon studies and collections made at intervals during November, 1970 to May, 1971 at different points in the park (Map).

Corbett National Park, earlier twice differently named, first as Hailey National Park, in 1935, and later as Ramganga National Park, is situated in the foot hills of the Western Himalayas, along Delhi-Ranikhet National Highway between 29° 13′ 30″ and 29° 35′ 15″ Nand 78° 46′ and 79° 33′ E. Originally comprising of an area of about 324 sq km it now extends to 525 sq km. The park partly consists of the forest reserves of Ramnagar and Kalagarh division of Uttar Pradesh. The part in Kalagarh division includes the drainage area of the Ramganga river (Map).

The natural forest of the park is confined to the Bhabar tract of Siwalik formation at altitudes of 700-1500 m with varied topography of many temporary marshy depressions, ravines and plateau land (Patli Dun). The river Ramganga flows through the plateau in westward direction before it takes a southward turn at Boxar. An appreciable portion of the present park area along the Ramganga river will be submerged in the near future on com-

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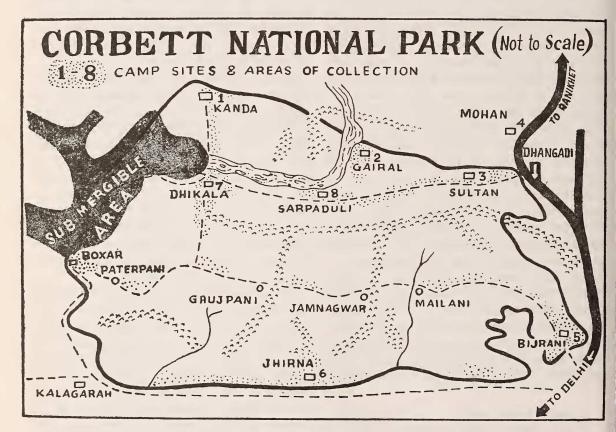
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pletion of the "Ramganga Multipurpose Hydel Project" at Kalagarh (Uttar Pradesh). This project necessitates all the more, the urgent conservation of vegetation in suitable areas to avoid silting and protect the vicinity of the dam from soil erosion, as it has begun to become evident in the case of some other multipurpose hydel projects.

Geologically, like other submontane tracts of the Western Himalayas the park belongs to Siwalik formation which is composed of conglomerates, sand rocks, sand stones and boulders. The soil is alluvial, the river beds are composed of water borne debris of the granite core of the Himalaya, small rounded pebbles,

scattered conglomerates, loose river gravel and sand.

The climate of the park area can be broadly distinguished as being cold from December-February with chilly and often frosty nights, at times with sufficient rains during this period, warm with sultry and high temperature from May-June, at times thunder showers with hailstones not being unusual. Wet, warm and humid July-September with plenty of monsoon rains. During October-November with southwest monsoon retreating autumn prevails with clear days and moderate temperature. Spring is ushered in March-April, the period being quite pleasant with moderate warmth,



Map of Corbett National Park.

and fast growing vegetation all round.

The vegetation is a mixed one of deciduous tropical and subtropical species. Mention may be made of botanically interesting pockets in the park such as Dhulwa east, Dhikala, Dhangadi nallah, Panod nallah, Pater nallah (Paterpani block), Kanda, Domunda block, Riparian tract of Ramganga and the section between Bijrani-Mailani.

The dominant tree species in the park is Sal (Shorea robusta), with its characteristic straight bole forming pure stands. After crossing Gajar sot near the sultan Forest Rest House there is a particularly dense, pure population of these lofty trees. A frequent associate of sal is Adina cordifolia with its buttressed base, hard reddish brown wood and heart shaped leaves. Holarrhena antidysenterica is a shorter tree with rough, brown bark, white flowers and slender follicles, also occurs scattered amidst the Sal. In open scrub land, one can easily spot Bombax ceiba the silk cotton tree; a tall deciduous tree with buttressed stem, widespread branches with large crimson flowers and woody capupright sules with closely packed seeds all covered in white silky hairs. A few other easily noticeable trees in the park are Anogeissus latifolia; a gregarious tree on hilly tracts with smooth pale vellowish or pinkish brown fluted crooked trunks and the foliage turning purple red at the onset of winter. Piliostigma malabarica with rough dark brown or blackish bark and characteristically acidic leaves. Bauhinia racemosa with short bole, low spreading crown, deeply fissured bark and sickle shaped pods. Kydia calycina with pale brown bark, heart shaped leaves and panicles of white flowers. Lagerstroemia parviflora with panicles of white flowers and ellipsoid glossy fruits. Cassia fistula—the Indian Laburnum, with dark grey rough bark, pendent bunches of bright yellow blossoms and slender cylindrical long fruits. Semicarpus anacardium with obovate-oblong leaves, turning to yellow before falling and black fruits hanging from bright orange fleshy receptacles. Emblica officinalis with minute greenish flowers in axillary fascicles and pale yellow, waxy, sour fruits, Zizyphus mauritiana with dense spreading crown, blackish to grey or brown bark, yellow to red, globose or ovoid stony fruits.

Some other miscellaneous deciduous species are *Holoptelea integrifolia* or Indian Elm—A large tree, bark smooth silvery grey with small green flowers and membraneous circular winged fruits. *Careya arborea* with brown bark, large sweet scented flowers and numerous conspicuous stamens. *Madhuca indica* with dark brown bark, fascicles of fragrant flowers and the sweet fleshy corolla which is edible raw, or used in sweet preparations. Mention may be made of *Erythrina* sp. and *Butea* sp. with their characteristic butterfly shaped scarlet and bright red orange tinged corollas, respectively.

Among the evergreen trees along the dry nallahs and on exposed habitats occur Wendlandia heynei with terminal pyramidal panicles of small white fragrant flowers. On other places a noticeable tree species is Mallotus philippensis with its leaves having the characteristic red glands and the fruits coated with a scarlet red resinous powder. Syzygium cumini or Black plum with pale brown bark, small fragrant flowers and the familiar dark violet fleshy edible fruits. The only indigenous conifer at Ghilmodya sot (Forest compartment No. 9/10) in the park boundary is *Pinus roxburghii* with the dark green needles in threes. Association of Dalbergia sissoo-Acacia catechu, along Ramganga river bordering Savannah at Dhikala is an interesting feature in the landscape of the park where a large area is covered with a dense growth of Themeda arundinacea a tall wavy

grass, bordered with Thysanolena maxima and Vetiveria zizanioides. Annually after the burning of the dense dry grass of the savannah of Dhikala (Dhikala chaur) there spring up amidst the new culms many other herbaceous element. This temporary herbaceous growth constitutes the food of the herbivorous hogdeer (Para) and spotted deer (Chital). Some of the easily noticeable herbaceous elements on Dhikala chaur are Evolvulus alsinoides with wiry branches and beautiful blue flowers. Roughly pubescent, slender, Vicoa indica with its yellow floral heads and Lactuca sp. with milky latex. Trichodesma indicum with rough leaves and funnel shaped corolla crowned with its cone of anthers. Other species that may be mentioned are Ajuga, Polygala, Desmodium, Crotalaria, Oldenlandia, rush like Cyperaceae and terrestrial orchids such as grass like Zeuxine and tuberous Eulophia species with flowers in varying shades of pink-blue. An interesting stemless undershrub in Dhikala chaur with its close rosette of 2 or 3 pairs of leaves resting on the ground is the dwarf Pygmaeopremna herbacea.

Apart from the savannah land of Dhikala, in quite a number of other spots also members of the Poaceae are widespread. Amongst these may be mentioned *Eulaliopsis binata*, *Apluda mutica*, *Oplismenus compositus* and *Eragrostis uniloides*. Of these *Eulaliopsis binata*—the baib grass is of considerable commercial value being used in the paper industry.

At other places in the park amongst common shrubs mention may be made of *Clerodendrum viscosum* with quadrangular channelled branches, large opposite leaves, scented white flowers and red fruits. This is a very close associate of Sal and densely gregarious. *Colebrookea oppositifolia* with densely silky tomentose quadrangular twigs. *Pogostemon benghalense* with herbaceous purple-ting-

ed, smooth, sub-quadrangular twigs and strong aromatic flowers in dense spikes, Adhatoda vasica, with two lipped white flowers and foetid smelling leaves. Artemisia nilagirica, with aromatic pinnatisect leaves. Spermadictyon suaveolens with blue flowers and foetid smelling young leaves. Murraya paniculata, with numerous fragrant white flowers. koenigii, with its aromatic leaves (used in flavouring curries), Rubus ellipticus, with prickly stem and branches, white flowers and golden vellow succulent fruits, favourite of the birds in the area. Zizyphus xylopyros, with its spreading crown, rusty tomentose prickly twigs. Zizyphus oenoplia, a straggling shrub with slender, brown tomentose twigs. Glycosmis arborea, with its orange smelling glossy leaves and white flowers, forms dense gregarious groups.

Still other shrubs of interest in the area are Helicteres isora, easily noticed due to its twisted fruits. Moghania strobilifera a loosely branching shrub with foliaceous bracts concealing the small flowers and later the little pods. Sida cordifolia a diffuse shrub with pale yellow flowers. Sida orientalis, with stellately hairy branches and rhomboid 3-nerved leaves. Tephrosia candida, with grooved branches, white and at times red-tinged flowers. Carissa spinarum an evergreen dense thorny shrub with sweet scented pinkish-white flowers. Woodfordia fruticosa a large shrub with long branches and numerous clustered tubular red flowers.

Among fleshy climbers occasionally *Pothos* can be seen scrambling over the tall trunks of Sal trees. The lianoid climbers of common occurrence in the park area are *Milletia auriculata*, with odd pinnate leaves and woody brown velvety pods; *Cryptolepis buchanani* with dark purplish-brown or blackish bark, terete whitish branches, opposite leaves and fruits of 2 divari-

cating follicles; Aspidopterys nutans, with opposite leaves, scented flowers and winged fruits; Vallaris solanacea, with fragrant white flowers tinged with green and blaze exuding milky juice. Forming a striking scene with its dense canopy of profuse flowers covering small to tall trees, is another fairly common climber, Porana paniculata. Still another common climber is Phanera vahlii, cream yellow flowered and with rusty, flat pods enclosing glossy dark brown seeds.

Parasitic plants, particularly the stem parasites, are easily noticeable due to their foliage, quite different from that of their host trees. These are *Dendrophthoe falcata*, with grey smooth bark, thick and fleshy leaves, upon *Shorea robusta*. *Scurrula pulverulenta*, with young leaves and shoots having white flocculent fugaceous tomentum and thick opposite leaves, on *Boehmeria rugulosa* and *Shorea robusta*. *Scurrula cordifolia*, with dark brown smooth bark, leaves covered with buff coloured scurfy tomentum on *Ougeinia ougeinensis*. *Cuscuta reflexa* the holo-parasite, leafless and long stranded, covers many shrubs and low trees.

The epiphytic growth is scarce and consists of a few orchid species like *Vanda* with flat keeled leaves and *Bulbophyllum* with leaves on pseudobulbs. These too are seen only in the environs of Bijrani and Sultan respectively.

There are numerous prostrate, slender herbs forming the ground cover. Of these the most noticeable, particularly in moist shady habitats is *Drymaria diandra* a spreading slender annual with stem-clasping cordate leaves and small white flowers. Other scattered fairly common herbs are *Justicia procumbens*, with quadrangular branches and flowers in dense axillary or terminal spikes. Procumbent *Borreria articularis* with opposite leaves and many tiny white flowers in compact globose axillary heads.

Boerhaavia diffusa, with deep stout roots and very small umbellate red flowers atop diffuse branches. Erect, Cynoglossum lanceolatum with white bluish-tinged flowers and fruiting nutlets with barbed bristles. Small hairy annual, Gonotheca ovalifolia, generally with four unequal leaves in a whorl. Procumbent Indigofera linifolia, with bright red flowers and small pods, Hoary tomentose Leucas mollissima with quadrangular stems and white flowers. Erect much-branched Bupleurum hamiltonii, with umbellate, yellow coloured flowers. Prickly bright green Solanum surattense with bluish flowers and vellow berries streaked green. Small delicate Oxalis sp. with 3-foliolate leaves. There are several members of the large family Asteraceae, easily recognised when in bloom by their characteristic heads. Of these mention may be made of Vernonia cinerea with beautiful pink-lilac heads. Radiating heads of Erigeron canadensis with flat heads, the heads with yellow tiny disc florets, encircled by white ligulate florets. Dichotomously branched deep rooted Elephantopus scaber with radical leaves and violet-purple, tubular flowers. Bidens biternata with white ray florets and sticky achenes. Tridax procumbens, with pinnatisect leaves and the head atop a long weak scape. A striking constitutent of the undergrowth below Dalbergia sissoo at Dhikala along the Ramganga river is Leonotis nepetaefolia singularly straight, with its stiff quadrangular stem and interspersed large globose green verticillasters and projecting bright orange to red bilipped flowers.

Another noticeable plant is the scrambling cypress vine—*Ipomoea quamoclit* with its finely divided leaves and scarlet flowers.

Purely aquatic vegetation does not exist in the park, but there are many herbaceous plants characteristic of moist, marshy or water-logged areas. Of these mention may be made of Ammania sp. Oenothera sp., Veronica sp., Hypericum sp. and Polygonum sp. In temporary little pools occur small colonies of Potamogeton, and here and there can be noted the characteristic rush-like clumps of Cyperaceae members. In open, moist areas Ranunculus sp. also occurs, easily noted when in bloom.

Amongst some of the other familiar plants should be mentioned the bamboos. They occur frequently in several blocks of the park. There are practically no palms, excepting for the stemless *Phoenix acaulis* scattered at places along the park boundary and the quite rare palm *Wallichia densiflora* easily recognised by its large leaves, the leaflets dark green above and white beneath.

Mention should also be made of some of the non-flowering plants. In many cool, shady moist areas, often in gregarious patches occur different species of ferns, all of them equally attractive due to their differently dissected leaves and the variously coiled young fronds. Pteris sp. Adiantum sp. etc. occur along running streams appearing almost like an arranged fernery. The snake-tongued fern Ophioglossum reticulatum has been spotted below sal trees, and the horse-tails or scouring rushes—Equisetum has been seen in clumps on sand banks along the river or stream margins.

The park with its falling trees, rotting trunks and accumulating debris supports its due share of fleshy and other kinds of fungi and lichens. The liverworts and the mosses too are seen in their usual habitats, on moist trunks. But this study has not particularly touched them.

The Corbett National Park is becoming increasingly popular with tourists, and has already begun to show evidence of the hand of man in altering vegetation. Established weeds that follow closely on the heels of man have begun to settle and spread. This will undoubtedly affect the indigenous vegetation. Amongst

these enterprising hardy intruders should be mentioned the ubiquitous *Lantana*. Still others are *Acanthospermum hispidum* and *Xanthium strumarium*. Yet another naturalised element forming gregarious colonies, is the 'Bhang' or *Cannabis sativa*.

The plants collected during this preliminary study have been classified habit-wise and listed with local Hindi vernacular names for some species as gathered from the staff of the forest department. The collection is deposited in the Botanical Survey of India, Northern Circle Herbarium at Dehra Dun (BSD).

LIST OF PLANTS

TREES

Adina cordifolia (Roxb.) Hook. f. ex Brandis 'Haldu'

Aegle marmelos (L.) Corr. 'Bel'
Albizzia odoratissima Benth.
Anogeissus latifolius (Roxb.) Wall. ex Bedd. 'Bakli'
Bauhinia racemosa Lamk.
Bauhinia retusa Roxb.
Boehmeria rugulosa Wedd.
Bridelia squamosa (Lamk.) Gehrm.
Dalbergia sissoo Roxb. ex DC. 'Sisham'
Diospyros exsculpta Buch.-Ham.
Ehretia laevis Roxb.

Emblica officinalis Gaertn. 'Aonla'
Ficus benghalense L. 'Bar'
Grewia glabra Bl.
Kydia calycina Roxb. 'Pula'

Madhuca indica Gmel. 'Mahwa'
Mallotus philippensis (Lamk.) Muell.-Arg.
Piliostigma malabaricum (Roxb.) Benth.

Semicarpus anacardium L.f. 'Bhilawa'
Terminalia alata Heyne ex Roth

Trema politoria Planch.

Wendlandia heynei (R. & S.) Sant. & Merch.

'Tirchoniya'

'Khatwa'

Zizyphus mauritiana Lamk. 'Ber'

SHRUBS

Abutilon indicum (L.) Sweet Acanthospermum hispidum DC. Achyranthes aspera L. Achyranthes bidentata Bl.

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Adhatoda vasica Nees Aerva sanguinolenta (L.) Bl. Ageratum conyzoides L. Alysicarpus vaginalis DC. Ardisia floribunda Wall. Ardisia solanacea Roxb.

Arachne cordifolia (Decne.) Hurusawa Artemisia nilagirica (Clarke) Pamp. Asparagus adscendens Roxb.

Barleria cristata Lindl. Barleria strigosa Willd.

Boehmeria platyphylla D. Don

Buddleja asiatica Lour. Callicarpa macrophylla Vahl. Cannabis sativa L. 'Bhang'

Carissa spinarum L. Cassia occidentalis L. Cissampelos pariera L. Clerodendron viscosum Vent. Colebrookea oppositifolia Sm. Crotalaria bialata Schrank Crotalaria sericea Retz.

Crotalaria tetragona Andr. Deeringia amaranthoides (Lamk.) Merr.

Desmodium gangeticum DC.

Desmodium heterocarpon (L.) DC. Desmodium pulchellum (L.) Benth. Desmodium retusum (D. Don) Sweet

Embelia robusta Roxb.

Glycosmis arborea (Roxb.) Corr. Helicteres isora L. 'Maror phali' Holmskioldia sanguinea Retz.

Inula cappa DC. Inula cuspidata Cl. Isodon coesta (Spreng.) Kudo Lantana camara L.

Maesa indica Wall. Maoutia puya Wedd. Mimosa himalayana Gamble

Mimosa rubicaulis Lamk. Moghania strobilifera (L.) St. Hil. & Jacks.

Murraya koenigii (L.) Spreng. Pavetta tomentosa Roxb. ex Rees

Phoenix humilis Royle

Pogostemon benghalense (Burm. f.) O. Ktze Pupalia lappacea Jacq.

Rumex hastatus D. Don 'Bhilmora'

Scoparia dulcis L.

Scutellaria repens Buch-Ham. ex D. Don

Sida acuta Burm. f. Sida cordifolia L.

Sida orientalis Cav. Sida rhombifolia L.

Solanum erianthum D. Don

Solanum incanum L. Solanum khasianum Cl.

Spermadictyon suaveolens Roxb.

Tamarix dioica Roxb. Tephrosia candida DC. Triumfetta rhomboidea Jacq.

Uraria lagopodioides (L.) Desv. ex DC.

Uraria neglecta Prain Urena lobata L.

Urtica parviflora Roxb.

Woodfordia fruticosa (L.) Kurz Xeromphis spinosa (Thunb.) Keay

Zizyphus nummularia (Burm. f.) Wt. & Arn.

Zizyphus oenoplia (L.) Mill. Zizyphus xylopyros (Retz.) Willd.

HERBS

Acrocephalus indicus (Burm. f.) O. Ktze.

Adenostemma lavenia (L.) O. Ktze.

Adiantum caudatum L. Adiantum philippense L.

Aleuritopteris grisea (Blauf.) Panigrahi

Amaranthus spinosus L. Ammania multiflora Roxb. Anagallis pumilla Swartz

Anaphalis busua (Buch.-Ham.) Hand.-Mazz.

Anisomeles indica (L.) DC.

Apluda mutica L.

Artemisia scoparia Waldst. & Kit.

Asplenium alternans Wall. Athyrium pectinatum (Wall.) Pr.

Atylosia crassa Prain

Atylosia scrabaeoides Benth.

Bidens biternata (Lour.) Merr. & Scherff

Biophytum reinwardtii Klotzsch Blainvillea acmella (L.) Philipson Boerhaavia diffusa L. Borreria articularis (L.) F.N. Wils.

Borreria pusilla (Wall.) DC. Brachiaria distachya (L.) Stapf

Bupleurum hamiltonii Balakrishnan

Canscora diffusa R. Br. Canscora decussata R. & S. Cassia obtusifolia L.

Cassia tora L.

Cheilanthes farinosa (Forsk.) Fee

Chenopodium album L. Chenopodium ambrosioides L.

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Chrysanthellum americanum (L.) Vatke Conyza stricta Willd. Corchorus olitorius L. Crotalaria albida Hevne ex Roth Crotalaria calycina Schrank Cyclosorus aridus (Don) Ching Cyperus brevifolius (Rottb.) Hassk. Cyperus globosus All. Cyperus kyllinga Endl. Cynoglossum lanceolatum Forsk. Cythocline purpurea (D. Don) O. Ktze. Dichanthium annulatum (Forsk.) Stapf Dicliptera roxburghiana Nees Dipteracanthus beddomei (Cl.) Santapau Distemon indicum Wedd. Dryopteris arida (Don) O. Ktze. Dryopteris cochleata (Don) C. Chr. Drymaria diandra Blume Elephantopus scaber L. Emila sonchifolia DC. Eragrostis tenella (L.) P. Beauv. ex Roem. et Schult. Eragrostis uniloides (Retz.) Nees ex Steud. Erigeron canadensis L. Eriophorum comosum Wall. ex Nees Equisetum debile Roxb. Euphorbia hirta L. Euphorbia hypericifolia L. Evolvulus alsinoides L. Floscopa scandens Lour. Gonotheca ovatifolia (Cav.) Sant. & Wagh Hedyotis verticillata (L.) Lamk. Indigofera linifolia Retz. Justicia procumbens L. var. simplex (D. Don) Yamazaki Justicia prostrata Gamble Knoxia sumaatrensis (Retz.) DC. Laggera falcata (D. Don) O. Ktze. Leonotis nepetaefolia R. Br. Lepidagathis incurva D. Don Leucas cephalotes (Roth) Spreng. Leucas lanata Benth. Leucas molissima Wall. Limnophila indica (L.) Druce Lindernia anagallis (Burm. f.) Pennell Lindernia ciliata (Colsm.) Merr. Lindernia nummularifolia (Don) Wettst. Lindenbergia indica (L.) Vatke Lygodium flexuosum (L.) Sw. Malvastrum coromandelianum (L.) Garcke Mazus pumillus (Burm. f.) Steenis

Mukia madraspatana (L.) Roem. Murdannia nudiflora Roxb. Murdannia spirata (L.) Brueckn. Nelsonia canescens (Lamk.) Spreng. Nepeta graciliflora Bth. Ophioglossum reticulatum L. Oplismenus compositus (L.) P. Beauv. Perilla frutescens (L.) Britt. Peristrophe bicalyculata (Retz.) Nees Peristrophe speciosa Nees Phaseolus aureus Roxb. Phaseolus trilobus Ait. Phyllanthus urinaria L. Phyllanthus virgatus J.G. Forst. Polygonum barbatum L. Polygonum glabrum Willd. Polygonum hydropiper L. Pouzolzia pentandra Benn. Pouzolzia zeylanica (L.) Benn. Pteris biaurita L. Rhynchoglossum obliquum Blume Rungia pectinata (L.) Nees Sida cordata (Burm. f.) Bross. Siegesbeckia orientalis L. Solanum nigrum L. Solanum surattense Burm. f. Sorghum nitidum (Vahl) Rees Tectaria macrodonta (Fée) C. Chr. Tephrosia hamiltonii J.R. Drummond Themeda arundinacea (Roxb.) Hassk. Themeda villosa (Poir) A. Camus Torenia cordifolia Roxb. Trichodesma indicum (L.) Lehm. Tridax procumbens L. Vernonia cinera Less. Vetiveria zizanioides (L.) Nash Vicoa indica (L.) DC. Zornia gibbosa Span

WOODY CLIMBERS

Abrus fruticulosus Wall. ex Wight & Arn.
Acacia pennata (L.) Willd.
Acacia torta (Roxb.) Craib
Caesalpinia bonduc (L.) Roxb.
Clematis gouriana Roxb. ex DC.
Clematis roylei Rehder
Ichnocarpus frutescens (L.) Ait.
Milletia auriculata Baker
Porana paniculata Roxb.
Tetrastigma lanceolarium Planch.

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HERBACEOUS CLIMBERS

Ampelocissus divaricata (Wall.) Planch.
Dioscorea anguina Roxb.
Ipomoea hederifolia L.
Ipomoea purpurea Roth
Ipomoea quamoclit L.

PARASITES

Dendrophthoe falcata (L.f.) Ettingh. Scurrula cordifolia (Wall.) G. Don Scurrula pulverulenta (Wall.) G. Don

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